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B I O G R A P H I C S K E T C H

Oct. 66

GEHLEN, Reinhard (@Dr. Schneider)

Born 3 April 1902 in Erfurt, Reinhard GEHLEN has been head of the BND since it began. While he will be due for retirement in April 1967, Bonn apparently has asked him to stay on for one or two years thereafter.

Now a Lieutenant General in the Reserve, GEHLEN entered military service during 1920, was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1923, and was assigned to the German General Staff in 1937. He rose to brigadier general during World War II, ending up as the top intelligence authority on the Russian front. He was dismissed by Hitler ("get rid of the man; he's crazy") for a factual briefing of the Russian Order of Battle in February, 1945.

Having preserved his Russian OB files, he interested the U.S. Army in his intelligence capabilities. After spending nearly a year as a POW in Washington, he returned to Germany in 1946 and activated his intelligence organization under U.S. Army sponsorship. Custody was transferred to WOFACT during 1949 and continued until the BND was legalized in 1956.

Mr. Jim Critchfield, who knows him well, commented after a 1963 visit: "Gehlen's highly personalized domination of

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German intelligence extends without interruption back into the late years of the war; he has survived all his counterparts in NATO; he is in this sense the dean of the Western intelligence world. In the past few years his own relationships with the Europeans has grown; his personal ties with America have declined. The passing of the Dulles family, Adenauer's final desire to consummate rapprochement of France and Germany in his own lifetime, and the early indifference of the Kennedy administration to Germany further contributed to the erosion of his orientation. He apparently foresees a growing diminution of the U.S. presence in Europe, is reinforcing his European ties and is initiating a subtle disengagement from the 'special arrangements' with us."

Concerning this "subtle disengagement," I think it is in part, at least, to be explained as a growing-up and away from the old tutelage position held by us vis-a-vis BND and as well known by Jim Critchfield. GEHLEN has told me, in effect, that he does not like to appear in the eyes of Bonn as a puppet of the Americans. This may account in part for the fact that, after years of hesitation, GEHLEN has now picked up ties with MI-6. One of his most trusted officers was sent there as Chief of Station.

I do not think that this broadening of contacts means that GEHLEN has weighed all factors in the balance and decided systematically to distance himself from us. He often refers to the fact we are good and old friends, adding that

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we can afford the luxury of frankness one with the other. He does not hesitate in his frankness when he feels he has been wronged; and when under fire, he attacks.

Our relations with him were troubled when we refused to accept his son-in-law as his Chief of Station, Washington. He took this as a personal affront.

The discovery of a Soviet agent in a senior post on his staff was a traumatic experience for his organization.

Although he is a friendly social companion, he eschews representational life.

His penetrating and steadfast gaze while concentrating on his conversational partner has earned him, among the Americans who know him, the name "blue eyes."

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